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Intra-Department Report on the Census of
Vermilion October 5-10, 1970. 1



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INTRA-DEPARTMENT REPORT ON
THE CENSUS OF VERMILION

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November, 1970

L Alberta, L Dept. of Municipal Affairs

L Provincial Planning Branch
Noel Dant, Director

Research Division
Wayne Jackson, Planning Officer



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ORIGIN OF THE CENSUS

In August, 1970, the Provincial Planning Branch was in the process of preparing a long-awaited planning report on the Town of Vermilion with the aim of providing a number of guidelines and recommendations concerning the growth of and change within the Town over the next twenty years and with special emphasis on land use. The most recent population figures were those obtained by D.B.S. in 1966. Some data, such as employment characteristics, were only available for 1961. The census data, as well, were only available at the enumeration area level. The Town of Vermilion is divided into three E.A.'s and as a result each is relatively large. The planning report required more recent data, and data which could be grouped at a "block level".

The Town of Vermilion, in the process of annexing some adjacent land, and believing that the population was on the rise, was also interested in obtaining a more up-to-date figure. The fact that municipal grants from the Province are awarded on the basis of "official" population counts, provided an added incentive. Town Council had approved \$200 to \$300 for the purposes of a population count.

The Provincial Planning Branch hoped to have more information than a simple head-count would provide. Types and numbers of dwellings, as well as age, sex, occupation and school preference of all residents was of particular interest. As a result the Town and the Provincial Planning Branch came to an agreement. The Branch would supervise the census and provide two enumerators, as well as the supervisor and the necessary stationery. The Town would select three enumerators and be responsible for their remuneration. The census would take place from October 5 to October 10.

THE CENSUS FORM

The census form (Appendix A) was designed to collect all the necessary information rapidly without creating problems for the enumerator concerned. Question 1 fixes the location of the household. The block number refers to the compiled plan and is an added check. Questions 2, 3, and 4 are of interest to both the planning report staff and the Town. Question 5 was inserted at the request of the Town. The form is somewhat similar to that used by several Alberta towns and cities, eg. Red Deer. The completed forms are to become the property of the Town once the Planning Branch has recorded all the information it requires.

THE PRELIMINARY STAGE

An advertisement was placed in the Vermilion Standard, published weekly, for the two weeks prior to the census (Appendix B). Later comment indicated that most of the Town's people were aware of the undertaking. The Town was divided into a number of areas for enumeration purposes (Appendix C). Each of the enumerators supplied by the Town was to be responsible for a central section, while the Branch enumerators, with transportation available and no personal commitments, were to cover the areas towards the Town's edges. The supervisor was to enumerate the institutional residences, as well as the hotels and motels. Binders containing an adequate number of census forms and a map of the area to be enumerated, were prepared for each census-taker.

A list of all town dwellings, with addresses, was not available. It was decided that the time and cost involved in drawing up such a list made it impractical. It was therefore to be the responsibility of each census-taker to personally

insure that all residences in his or her district were enumerated.

The three enumerators the Town selected were married women, two of whom had a sound knowledge of the Town. This proved to be very valuable where the land use was interchanged, i.e. residences located behind, above or within commercial establishments. The enumerators supplied by the Branch were technologists, one of whom had done a great deal of field work on various research projects. The Town was to pay the women by household enumerated.

THE ACTUAL ENUMERATION

The formal instruction of the Town-hired enumerators took place on the morning of Monday, October 5 and consisted mainly of reviewing the census form, insuring that the enumerators were certain which area they were going to cover, and issuing the binders along with a special sheet of instructions (Appendix D). These enumerators began work immediately after the instructional period. The Branch enumerators began work on the Tuesday morning. All of the census-takers signed a pledge of secrecy (Appendix E). The enumerators usually began work by 10:00 A.M. The women, with family responsibilities, adjusted their schedule accordingly. Many call-backs had to be made during the supper hours and the evening. Little difficulty was encountered by any of the enumerators. A number of elderly people were hesitant when asked their year of birth. It was originally thought that question 5 would create a problem, but this was not the case.

All loose-ends were tied up by mid-afternoon Friday. The three women had finished their work by Thursday evening, visiting about 210, 175 and 155 households respectively. The remaining census-takers spent Friday morning solely doing call-backs. Each of these gentlemen visited about 170 households.

POST-CENSUS WORK

A number of counts were made at the Provincial Planning Office, and the population of Vermilion during the week of October 5 - 10, 1970, was found to be 2,949 (1,475 males; 1,474 females). The data collected, however, is not of concern here. A questionnaire and covering letter (Appendix F) were sent to 43 randomly selected households (about 5 per cent of the total) as a post-census check. To date, thirty-three have been returned. None of these households had been omitted by the enumerators, and there appears to be no discrepancies between the data collected in the field and that found on the completed questionnaires.

COMMENT

The Vermilion census ran extremely smoothly with only a few minor problems. There were one or two instances when residents objected to answering any of the questions. The enumerators proved to be most reliable. The fact that the Town-hired personnel were paid by the sheet rather than the more commonly used hourly rate appeared to have a positive effect on their efficiency. In a Town the size of Vermilion it is unlikely that reliable enumerators would be willing to commit definite time periods to census work, a necessity when hourly rates are employed. Family commitments would be the major drawback.

Given the co-operation of the Town authorities, and the availability of reliable enumerators there should be little difficulty in carrying out a census for towns with a population of up to four or five thousand in a manner similar to that used in Vermilion. Where larger towns are concerned the method

would no doubt have to be modified. To cover the Town in the same time period more enumerators and therefore greater supervision and organization would be required.

The administering of a local census was apparently a first for the Provincial Planning Branch. It provided the opportunity to obtain up-to-date primary information and orient it to the project at hand. It is not often that planners are blessed with such a situation. This information is most useful in the forecasting of future land use requirements, the need for classroom space, utilities, recreation facilities and so on. Planners can also use this data to help recognize areas of a town where overcrowded conditions exist and housing changes have to be considered. It is in this light that I encourage the Branch to take advantage of any future opportunity in this direction, with respect to actual or proposed research projects. Such foresight may eliminate many of the problems associated with the nature of available data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer would like to thank Prof. W. W. McVey of the Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, for some sound advice on census-taking.

cc: Provincial Planning Branch
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Town of Vermilion
D. R. Mitchell

Dept. of Sociology, University of Alberta
Prof. W. W. McVey

APPENDIX A

TOWN OF VERMILION - CENSUS 1970 (September)

1. Address or Location _____

Block Number _____ Is a call-back necessary? Yes ____ No ____

2. How many housekeeping units (suites) at this address? _____

(If there is more than one unit at this address, complete this sheet for the first unit only. Use an additional sheet for each of the other units. Mark them a, b, c, etc. and join them together with a clip.)

3. Details of all persons residing in this unit?

SURNAMES	INITIALS	YEAR OF BIRTH	SEX	PRESENT OCCUPATION

4. Which of the following will children of pre-school age attend?

Public School ____; Separate School (Roman Catholic) ____; Private School ____.

5. (a) Are the persons residing here owners _____ or renters _____?

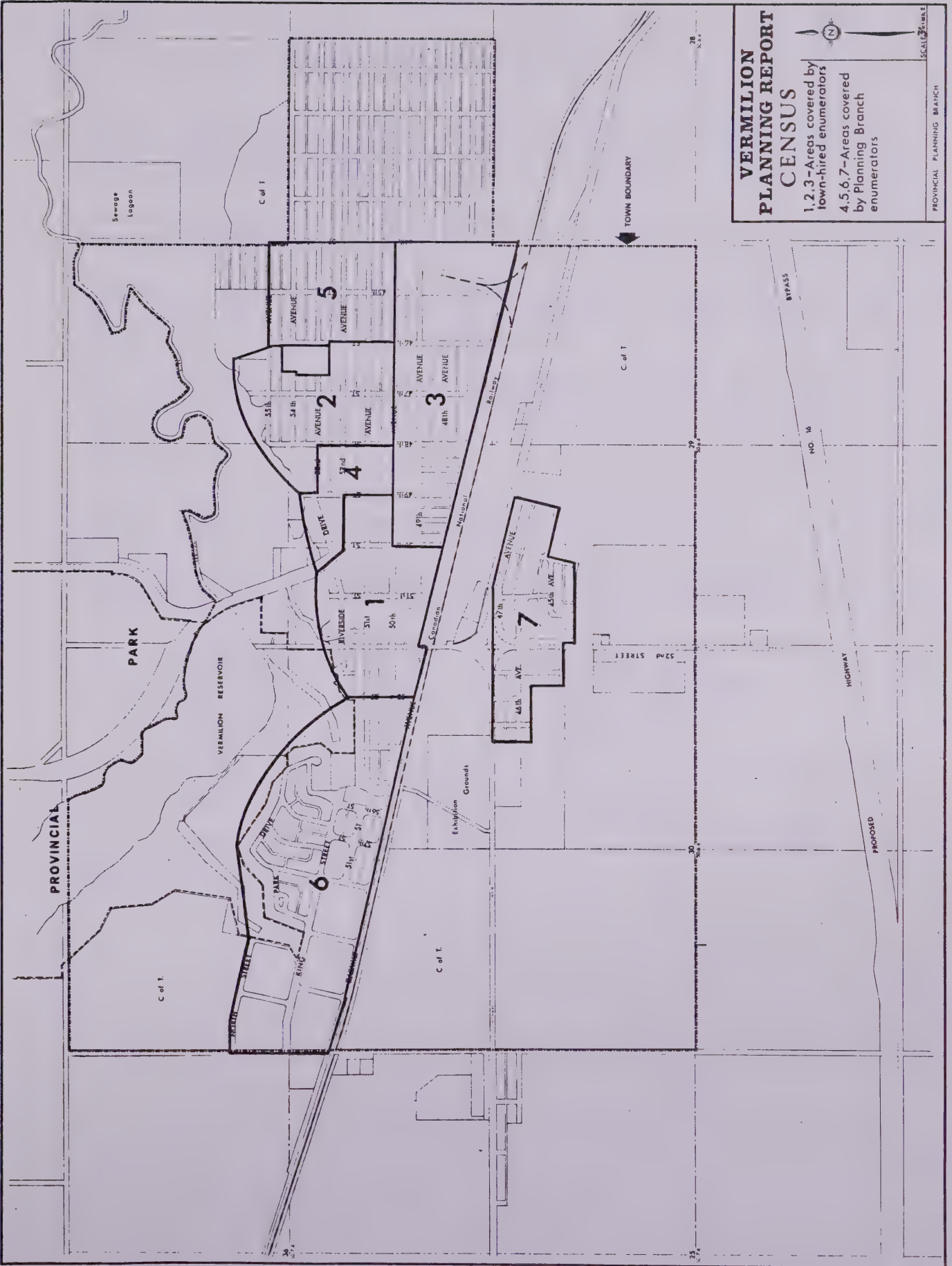
(b) If they are renters who do they rent from? _____

APPENDIX B

NOTICE: RE CENSUS

A complete population census of Vermilion will be conducted October 5, through October 10, 1970. Data, which will remain confidential, will be obtained on every bonafide resident living within the town limits during this period. Citizens are asked to give their complete co-operation to the census taker who calls on them. This undertaking is extremely important because the allocation of Provincial funds to the Town of Vermilion is based on the population reported in the census. Kindly pass this information on to your neighbors and friends.

D. R. MITCHELL,
Town Secretary.



VERMILION

PLANNING REPORT

CENSUS

1,2,3-Areas covered by town-hired enumerators

4,5,6,7-Areas covered by Planning Branch enumerators

SCALE 1:50,000

PROVINCIAL PLANNING BRANCH

APPENDIX D

INSTRUCTIONS TO ENUMERATORS

1. A sheet must be started for all houses or units in your area, even if you are unable to find someone home over several days. This will enable us to contact the residents later.
2. Upon reaching a house or suite, record the address or location and block number in section 1.
3. Then approach the house. If no responsible and knowledgeable person is at home then check "yes" after the call back question. This means you must return later to complete the questionnaire.
4. If a respondent is at home then proceed with completing the questionnaire. Be sure to introduce yourself and assure the respondent that a) you are not selling encyclopedias and b) all information will remain in the strictest confidence.
5. The instructions in question 2 mainly apply to apartment buildings, basement suites, 4-plex, etc. If you are not clear please check.
6. Be sure to record all houses or units and visit as many as possible. However, if any of the following are found in your area do not visit them.

Vermilion Valley Lodge
Nursing Home
Hospital
Agricultural College
Brunswick Hotel

M & B Motel
Flamingo Motel
R.C.M.P Detachment
Trailer Park
Vermilion Hotel

Be sure however, to visit residences of clergy which are attached to or close by the church itself. (i.e. rectory, manse, etc.)

Also be certain to record all dwellings above or behind commercial establishments.

APPENDIX E

DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA



REPLY TO:

PROVINCIAL PLANNING DIRECTOR

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS BUILDING

10363 - 108 STREET

EDMONTON 14, ALBERTA

REFER TO FILE No.

YOUR FILE No.

POPULATION CENSUS OF VERMILION

VERMILION, ALBERTA

September 15, 1970

In the course of taking a census, enumerators are frequently requested to divulge information gathered during the census, eg. the private affairs of persons interviewed by the enumerator. I *ÉLGINE RAYSON* do hereby pledge that information of this kind will not be revealed. I further pledge to direct to the Director's attention, any inquiry concerning matters related to the census.

Mrs E Rayson

APPENDIX F

DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA



REPLY TO:
PROVINCIAL PLANNING DIRECTOR
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS BUILDING
10363 - 108 STREET
EDMONTON 14, ALBERTA

REFER TO FILE No.

YOUR FILE No.

October 10th, 1970.

Dear Sir/Madame:

Recently a census of Vermilion was conducted by the Town in conjunction with the Provincial Planning Branch. In order to assure that no households were overlooked you are being asked to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. An addressed and stamped envelope is also enclosed. All responses are kept in the strictest confidence.

May I impress upon you the importance of this questionnaire in the overall success of the census project by reminding you that Provincial grants are awarded to the town on the basis of population.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W. Jackson".

W. Jackson,
(for) Provincial Planning Director.

WJ/jam
Encl.

1. During the week of October 5-10 was your household visited by a census taker? YES ____; NO _____. Kindly check with all members of the household.

2. What is your street address or location in Vermilion?

3. List the following details about yourself and all persons residing in your household.

	Year of Birth	Sex	Present Occupation
a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			
f.			
g.			
h.			

4. If you have children of pre-school age which of the following will they attend?

Public School ____; Separate School (Roman Catholic) ____;

Private School ____.

